

DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #114!

You gotta love Professional Wrestling. The good is SOO fucking GOOD. In THIS!- next in our long line of Japan Indie Sleaze Promotions SHowcase Of Wrestling Reviews- This is the best one ever I SAY! It goes from the great (GAEA) to the up-and-coming (DDT, OSAKA PRO) to the preposterous (FMW SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT). We also delve into the much-maligned, blood-drenched career of Keiji Mutoh/Great Muta. We also clock in with a fabulous new theme of madcap international interpromotional mayhem. But enough of the pointless hype, PULL INTO YOUR SWEET SWEET EMBRACE THE ALLURING AND SEXY PHIL RIPPAA....

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#####Osaka Pro - Samurai TV (Taped 7/24/99, Aired 8/25/99)
(PHIL RIPPA)

Osaka Pro is the group that was started up by Super Delfin after he got fed up with Michinoku Pro- which means the return of some old favorites in addition to new guys who I had never seen with some really bizarre outfits.

The tape opens with a bunch of clips, the highlight being Dick Togo putting Naohiro Hoshikawa through a table with a big fat senton. We next join Delfin in the ring with all his boys. They are interrupted by Togo, Black Buffalo, Police Man and Big Dick 296, who are a heel stable whose name I don't know. Big Dick is the groups mouth piece and he introduces a clip that shows the fellows participating in some sort of SATAN WORSHIP! It could have been an elaborate bible study too but I'm going with SATAN WORSHIP! Basically idea is that there is a guy in a hood leading the ceremony and they are trying to resurrect the spirit of someone. Bottom line. IT'S SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT BABY!

Toritos vs. Super Demkin: The progression of wrestling crustaceans takes its next step as Toritos is a wrestling LOBSTER, right down claw hands and a tail. He is a portly creature who is not afraid to do a moonsault or two. Of course, he yukked it up with the crowd a lot which was probably an attempt to win over their trust and put down their butter knives. Demkin did a couple of dropkicks and that was it. Short match that saw the lobster go over.

Ebsessan vs. Monkey Magic: Seeing Monky Magic makes me shutter because I get the feeling that Delfin is going to be calling in a favor and convincing Yone Genjin to come out of retirement at any moment. Some more unnecessary comedy, as Monkey Magic humps the ref and hops around the ring ropes because...well... he is a monkey and all. Meanwhile, Ebsessan is all about the Fu Manchu mustache and the elephant ears attached to the mask. Some decent lucha matwork through the beginning of this match. And that was it. About six minutes in the decide to bring it home as Ebsessan wins with an absurd rollup that has Monkey sucking his own cock.

Kuishibu Kamen vs. Arkangel: Kamen is another in the long line of wrestling clowns, complete with baggy pant and novelty oversized glasses sewn on his mask. Arkangel merely shrugs at all

this and says "I've seen wrestling clowns all my life son. Let's get to the wrestling." Arkangel plays to the crowd a lot but he still couldn't manage to win over the kiddie demographic as lots of babies are heard crying on the tape as Arkangel whips into the friendly clown. Action was all but there was no story behind. Pretty much, "I'm going to do this now. Okay, well let me do this to you." Kamen did bust out a nice little Asai moonsault while Arkangel worked all stiff, punching the smiling clown right in his oversized lips. Arkangel wins with a quality Lyger Bomb. Nothing to complain. Could have been better if they had worked on building to something instead of passing out candy to the kids.

Naohiro Hoshikawa/Yoshihito Sugamoto vs. Tsubasa/Oriental: By the end of the Sekigun/KDX feud, Hoshikawa had turned into quite the good little wrestler. So I was stoked about seeing him again for the first time in awhile. And I am happy to report that Hoshikawa can still bring it, even with the leathery Japanese motorcycle gang look that he has now. Man those shiny tights and boots look like they came straight out of the pages of Schneider's International Male catalog. Hey it's Sugamoto, he's..... Sugamoto. Unfortunately for us- the viewer, the majority of the match is Sugamoto getting worked over. While fitting in with the psychological of the match (Tsubasa and Oriental know that Hoshikawa is a handfull so they will pick on the younger, less talented member), it means not enough Hoshikawa laying in the kicks. I'm still up in the air about Tsubasa. He seems like he has some potential and I have heard some good things about him but he hasn't done anything yet to knock my socks off. Oriental and Tsubasa are not afraid to break out the supremely Van Damesque rolling and tumbling, fruity embellished routines. Especially the really freaky handspring elbow/clothesline combo. Hoshikawa is able to lay in a couple of brief beatings but it seems that his main purpose is to constantly bail his partner out of trouble. My problem with the match is that they start building to this really hot finish that stalls because Oriental and Tsubasa keep getting all elaborate and the whole momentum stalls. It almost seemed that they couldn't remember how they were supposed to end the match. They finally hit a super rana/splash combination to pin Sugamoto. Nowhere near wretched but could have been better.

Super Delfin/Masato Yakushiji/Masaru Seno vs. Dick Togo/Black Buffalo/Policeman: Looky here. It's Delfin and Togo in a six-man but Yakushiji was never an acceptable replacement for the Great Sasuke and Seno it certainly not Tiger Mask while Buffalo and Policeman aren't TAKA and Men's Teioh. With that being said, this is still a very good match. Especially when you don't try to compare it too the old MPRO matches of lore. Buffalo and Policeman both seem to be trying to find exactly what their wrestling niche is going to be. Policeman seems to be striving for the aerial wrestler who isn't afraid to sell anything. Buffalo seems quite content to be the straight traditional rudo (headbutts to the groin, flipping off the crowd, etc..) Both do fairly well especially Policeman who took some NASTY bumps throughout the match. The general story behind the match is that the Togo lead team are recruiting young, impressionable Seno - which baffles me since he is so far and away the worst wrestler in this match. So after Seno blows a couple of simple moves, his teammates are questioning his allegiances. The standard six-man formula is followed as everybody grabs a partner and then the heels dominate for awhile. Yakushiji is practically jumping for joy that he gets to work with Togo again as Togo could always sell Yakushiji's outdated Misterio Jr. offense. (On a side note, who ever told Yakushiji that wearing

the wetsuit was a good idea was horribly mistaken.) It is wonderful to see Togo wrestling again and he immediately shows he is back in his element as he easily would wrestle for five in he had too. He must have some residual bitterness from the WWF days because he was taking it out on poor Yakushiji. Delfin is barely in the match and when he is it is all on offense. He of course recruits Policeman in to see if he can see how rubbery the man in the riot gear mask can be. Answer is a whole lot. Finally the highspot train rolls in Policeman immediately jumps even higher on my list of wrestlers as he gets some serious air with a BOSS super quebrada. The faces run into one small problem though. Yakushiji and Delfin leave Seno alone and Togo swoops in and damn near kills the portly youngster with a senton for the win.

But wait kids, the fun isn't over yet. The lights go out and a mind-numbingly long ceremony starts as the HOODED FIGURE comes out and takes/gives blood with Seno. I don't know, it was all SATANARIFIC. Eventually the heels leave and everyone checks on the bloody Seno. Seno just waves everyone off and staggers back to the dressing room but not before shooting a menacing look at Delfin. Hey I thing the kids call that foreshadowing! Clips are then shown of an eight-man that includes the hooded figure. Delfin meanwhile has wised up and brought Hoshikawa to the fight. We are shown the faces getting their mitts on the HOODED FIGURE. The beat him up and rip off his hood to reveal..... Wait for it..... some gagged guy. The camera barely shows who it is but I am able to determine that it is a friend of Delfin's or something. Suddenly, another HOODED FIGURE appears. This one takes off his hood to reveal..... Wait for it..... SENO completely with face paint and bad perm. Seno runs in chokeslams Delfin and we are out.

Well, the wrestling was good and the everything else was SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT BABY! Definitely worth a look. If SATAN WORSHIP! isn't your cup of tea, you always have the luxury of the fast forward button.

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@#@@#@@#@@#FRONTIER MARTIAL-ARTS WRESTLING- 10TH ANNIVERSARY-
MAKING OF NEW LEGEND (11-23-99 Yokohama Arena)
(PETE STEIN!)

This would be the second of FMW's anniversary shows in 1999, assuming one counts the May show from Bunka as one as well.

WEW SIX-MAN TAG TITLE- SNATCHING LADDER MATCH: GEDO/JADO/KOJI NAKAGAWA (w/Kaoruko Arai) vs. RICKY FUJI/CHOCOBALL MUKAI/FLYING KID ICHIHARA (w/ Sena Wakana): Someone out there has to explain Jado's "Extra- Crispy Triple H" gimmick to me. On the other team, Sena comes out wearing a prim business suit- ***STRIP ALERT!*** ***STRIP ALERT!*** Chocoball's "porn star" gimmick is only a rip-off of Val Venis until you find out that he's an ACTUAL PORN STAR. You can tell he's a good guy because he tosses what appears to be condoms to the fans and preaching safe sex is such a babyface move. =P

Super-disturbing entrance montage aside (never to be described in these pages), he seems to be a reasonably competent (if not emerald green) wrestler who throws some surprisingly nasty kicks. Match proper is a heatless clusterfuck until TNR drops Chocoball and Jado embeds the

ladder in his moneymaker with a dropkick. Much Ladder-Fu ensues until everyone on each side gets a chance at grabbing the belts and gets stopped.

With everyone else staggered Gedo heads up top, which leads to the big spot of the match- Sena takes the suit off! GREAT GOOGLY MOOGLY! Gedo is predictably stunned and Fuji takes him out with a powerbomb, but now it's Shoichi Arai's 17-year-old daughter's turn to lose her own Sailor Moon school outfit. Ricky goes "Who am I, Marty Jannetty?" but in the meantime Jado PANTSES Fuji and tosses him off. Sena tries to stop Jado from climbing the ladder; Jado kicks her down to some huge heat, but Fuji pushes him off and Sena nuts him on the way down. Kaoruko takes umbrage with this and before you know it we've got an underage girl brawling with a porn star in the sleaziest catfight ever (and BOY does that cover some ground). While this is going on you've got all six wrestlers literally draped around the ladder, with Fuji and Gedo on top punching away until Fuji finally drops Gedo and grabs the belts for the title switch. Match was decent, but I had to take a shower to cleanse the evil away afterwards.

At this point Shoichi Arai gives the welcome address, which leads to a really funny bit as Fuyuki comes out dressed in a tux and mocks Arai with his own welcome speech. They banter back and forth until Shawn Michaels appears on the FrontierTron and sends them to their room. FMW IS WMF!

JOSHI SPECIAL TAG HANDICAP MATCH: KAORI NAKAYAMA/ EMI MOTOKAWA vs. MISS MONGOL /MALIA HOSAKA /JAZZ: Apparently no one told the American team that it's CosPlay night in FMW, as Kaori comes out decked up like Sabu while EMI~! wears a cowgirl outfit. Hosaka cuts the single greatest Southern Japanese Redneck Nisei promo of all time: "I may have Japanese blood in my veins, but I'm American-born and American-made and you're fixing to get an American ass-kicking!" Jazz cuts a far less memorable promo although this one leads to the one-man "ECW!" chant from some bozo in the crowd. First half of the match is more or less one long HEAT SEGMENT on Nakayama until she ducks a chairshot from Mongol and tags in Emi who goes dropkick-crazy on Mongol and hits a big plancha to the floor on all three. Nakayama tags back in, uses Tajiri's old "dial cradle" on Mongol and goes up top to try a tornado DDT, but Mongol turns it into a Liger bomb. She follows up with the chubbiest rolling bodyblock ever and tags in Mini-Midnight who hits the Jazz Stinger to no reaction whatsoever. Jazz slams Kaori and Hosaka goes for a swan dive splash but Kaori moves and tags Emi back in. Emi slams Hosaka and Kaori hits a moonsault on her, then goes up top and hits a plancha to the floor on Mongol and Jazz (who thought she was going to do another moonsault). Back in-ring Emi slams Hosaka again, and this time she and Kaori do Rolling Thunder (splash-legdrop combo) off the same turnbuckle onto her. Mongol and Jazz pull Emi to the floor, but Jazz accidentally slugs Mongol and Kaori hits a top-rope Diamond Cutter on Hosaka for the pin. OK match, but the crowd wasn't reacting to anything and they were dying out there by the end.

JUDO JACKET MATCH: HIDO vs. WILLIE WILLIAMS: Let's move on, shall we?

WRESTLING DENSHO SPECIAL TAG MATCH: YOSHINORI SASAKI/ NAOHIRO YAMAZAKI vs. TERRY FUNK/ DORY FUNK JR.: The Funks come out with some young kid (Crash Funk?

=P) carrying Bruiser Brody's gear, as they dedicate the match to Brody and say they're not going to lose tonight because of him. Jeez, like the outcome was in doubt to begin with? This whole match is deeply on the nostalgia tip as the Funks work all their old 70s spots (double punch off the ropes, European uppercuts, etc) on the frisky yet hopelessly outclassed rugrats. Dory works stiff on both guys with the uppercuts, but it's more than a little sad watching them have to move right into position to take bumps for Dory like he's fricking Tinieblas Sr. Funks win at the 15-minute mark with stereo spinning toeholds... one more thing. Dory really needs to take a hint from Terry and invest in some long tights. "Ma, Grampa's wrestling in his trunks again and the neighbors are complaining!"

WEW Hardcore Title Match: Kintaro Kanemura vs. Balls Mahoney: The FMW goofiness officially kicks into high gear as Kanemura comes out and does the TNR dance with three old guys dressed as cheerleaders for the Yakuza. They do some schtick in-ring for a couple of minutes before Balls comes out and the Japanese Three Stooges scatter. They soon brawl up the ramp, where Balls whips Kanemura into some beams resulting in a cheesy explosion and hits a DDT. The sad thing is that the explosion's bigger than the one they had at the Funk-Cactus KOTDM final in '95. To the backstage we go, where a TV gets sledge-hammered and Kanemura gets hiptossed onto the hood of a car. Kanemura comes back by smashing out the car's windshield with the sledgehammer, tossing Balls into the car, reaching through the remains of the windshield and grinding Balls' face into the glass in a neat if highly contrived spot. Balls comes back after squeezing his fat ass out of the car ("BEEEEEEEEEP!") by slamming the door on Kanemura's arm, smashing the front window in the process. They battle on top of the car and Balls powerbombs Kanemura on the roof for a near-fall, and now both J Taro and the play-by-play man are losing it, gasping "falls count anywhere!" Balls strolls over and sets up two tables near the car, giving Kanemura plenty of time to recover and backdrop Balls into them when he goes for another powerbomb off the car. They brawl back to the entranceway where Kanemura grabs a table and a chain; Balls comes back with a fork, but Moe-san gives Balls a couple of chairshots and Kanemura hits a backdrop on the ramp. Balls comes back with a backdrop of his own and tries to superkick Kanemura, but Kanemura moves and Balls kicks the other set of beams. "Ladies and Gentlemen-SURVIVOR!" Kanemura then chokes out Balls with the chain, ties him to the table with Moe-san's help, climbs to the top of the stage and hits the PHAT-ASS SENTON!!! onto Balls from like 20 feet for the pin to win the title. Balls dragged this one down quite a bit, although the finish was something else.

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At this point they run a video for Ohya and Kuroda rolling some guy on a city street somewhere, capped off with Ohya giving the guy the cobra twist. The crowd absolutely eats this shit up, but fer the love of Mike someone has GOT to explain these things to me. =) Anyhoo, this leads into:

WEW Tag-Team Title Match: "PSYCHO" Tetsuhiro Kuroda/ Hisakatsu Ohya vs. Tommy Dreamer/Raven: Kuroda comes down to the ring flanked by two guys on Harleys, but immediately gets smoked by Ohya's entrance. It's a beaut, too: Ohya strolls down to ringside pulling a rickshaw as his manager, singer Tomomi Tanimoto sits inside singing his

theme song! A million billion stars. Raven and Dreamer come out afterwards and they all rattle or something.

Since this is the live feed, they run something like 10-15 minutes of Tanaka-Fuyuki history while the cage gets set up. Man, the footage of Arai getting peed on and sobbing in the bathroom afterwards is too creepy for words...

WEW HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE/15,000 VOLT CAGE THUNDERBOLT DEATH MATCH: MASATO TANAKA vs. KODO FUYUKI: The Thunderbolt cage is a nifty thing that looks like something out of a mad scientist's laboratory, right down to the electricity coursing up through the "conductors" in each corner; the FMW roadies helpfully illustrate this point by dimming the house lights before the thing gets powered up. Still, the cage is set a couple of feet away from the ring and the ropes are still in place so it's basically a regular match until someone gets thrown onto the apron. Fuyuki soon gets tossed onto the apron and Tanaka hits the running elbow; Fuyuki stays on the ropes after that, but Tanaka climbs up top and hits a legdrop on Fuyuki who springs backwards into the cage for the first (teeny-weeny!) explosion. Tanaka hits another elbow as Fuyuki staggers against the ropes, but as he goes for a third Fuyuki backdrops him into the cage (!) for an explosion. Fuyuki hits Banana Panic, a NASTY fishermanbuster and a powerbomb for 2 counts... I'll give Fuyuki his due, he does seem to work his keister off when it comes to the big shows. Match goes back-and-forth until Tanaka hits the Diamond Dust for 2. Fuyuki comes back with a RIPPER of a German Suplex but Tanaka no-sells it and hits a running elbow for 2. He heads up top but Fuyuki intercepts him, places him in position for that weird Yone Genjin hold and drops him into a cool brainbuster for 2. Tanaka gets KO'd by this, which allows Fuyuki to unscrew all the ropes in one corner in between glomming Tanaka with the wrench he uses to unscrew them with. Fuyuki chokes Tanaka out with one of the ropes but only gets a 2-count. Finally Fuyuki goes to whip Tanaka into the cage; Tanaka reverses and elbows Fuyuki onto the apron, then gives him a second elbow directly into the transformer for the explosion. Fuyuki staggers into the ring, where Tanaka hits a powerbomb for 2. Tanaka goes for the Ro(ar/I)ing Elbow; Fuyuki blocks it, hits an uraken and goes for Banana Panic, but Tanaka ducks and hits the Elbow for 2. They both slap away at each other until they send each other into the cage at the same time so we get the FMW-mandatory "Everyone sells the explosion including the ref" death match bump. Fuyuki falls on top for 2, then both take a 9-count. Fuyuki gets up and goes for Banana Panic one last time, but Tanaka blocks it and hits the Elbow for the pin at around 15 minutes to win the WEW title. Postmatch is cool as Tanaka pretends to be one of Yokohama's Strongest, loading an unconscious Fuyuki into a conveniently-located garbage truck and driving off merrily into the night. Really good match, although they probably could've sold the damage from the cage more than they did. Tanaka does get brownie points from me for honking the horn as he drives off, because I'm a goof.

COUNTDOWN MILLENNIUM: H vs. HAYABUSA: More clips setting up *their* (much cooler IMO) history, including their super-dorky rookie days. Dying his hair and putting on the cool pants was easily the best thing Gannosuke ever did, because I don't think he could've headlined for EAGLE with his old look. ;) H gets this great "HE'S A WIZARD!!!" entrance, levitating over the stage entrance and then disappearing into a cloud of steam (so they don't blow the visual by

forcing him to remove the harness). Of course, Michaels is the "Showstopper" so he actually makes his entrance AFTER H and Hayabusa make theirs; Hayabusa shows his displeasure at this by NUTTING Michaels while getting checked out. And we're off! Hayabusa controls the early stages, taking over after a hot start by H and controlling him with a headscissors that Michaels actually makes fairly dramatic by checking H's arm and doing the "arm drops twice" bit. Hayabusa soon makes the mistake of taking too many liberties with Michaels, who finally loses it and *toasts* Hayabusa with the superkick. He then tries to unmask Hayabusa, and H actually has to restrain him from heading out after Hayabusa. Gannosuke finally says "The hell with it," unmasks and tosses Michaels the Hayabusa hood. They start to brawl on the floor (Michaels: "4! 5!" Gannosuke: "No count!" Michaels: "6!" Crowd: "LOL!") until H lays him out with a double-underhook powerbomb. He tries to do it again on the apron, but this time Gannosuke reverses it and gives H a backwards Fire Thunder to the floor! H sells for a long time while Gannosuke and Michaels resume their banter from before. Gannosuke controls the next several minutes until H no-sells a throw-out German suplex and crushes him with a spin kick. H hits the Falcon Arrow for a near-fall but Gannosuke comes right back with two straight Gannosuke Clutches. He follows with a backdrop and goes for a German, but H blocks it with an Inferno Kick. He hits the Firebird and follows with H Thunder (rock bottom), both for 2. Gannosuke comes back with a lariat and a Tiger suplex, then PLANTS H with Fire Thunder for 2. He follows with the Shinzaki powerbomb and heads up top, but H drops him with a kick to the head and hits a top-rope Frankenstein. Gannosuke comes back and charges H, who hits a Dragon suplex; Gannosuke pops right back up but H pops him with a shotay (huge pop) and hits H Thunder again for 2. H slams Gannosuke, heads back up top and damn near kills Gannosuke with the Phoenix Splash, knees-first across Gannosuke's face for the pin at 18-minutesish. Postmatch Michaels gets them to shake hands, puts them and FMW over on THE STICK, and his music inexplicably plays for good measure. Michaels takes off, at which point H and Gannosuke make up for good and the two young wrestlers bask in the afterglow. Good match, but the crowd was really dead for most of it.

Overall this was a decent show, but Yokohama Arena was probably the wrong place to run it. Or would running it at Bunka have defeated the purpose?

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@#@@#@#@# DRAMATIC DREAM TEAM- SECOND ANNUAL JUNIOR
TOURNAMENT-4/27/1999-HANDHELD
(DEAN RASMUSSEN)

DDT is quite the Hot Pocket (without all the cheddar and ham and stuff) of dynamic and versatile Junior Heavyweights, this is the first pure showcase of these youngsters to hit the shores of the US, and it's really good. Schneider and Doron both commented on the relative brevity of the matches making this a less than stellar showcase- as they are all in the ten minute and under range, but if you consider that Lucha Tournaments have matches of this length and this style can be traced directly to all kinds of lucha, I have no problem making the transition to non-US matches being Nitro-length. The thing I would have to make as a point of contention is that ALL of these matches are good, some are REALLY good, but none are MOTYC calibre- which is about what can be expected from such youngsters UNLESS you think about the fact

that the TORYUMON punks have had longer matches with better results. But, to be fair to the Dramatic Dream Team, these are really young punks without the brilliant tutelage of Ultimo Dragon so this is about as fun as this sleazy indie tourney can get, so I was all over it.

Takashi Sasaki vs Akinori Tsukioka: HEY! HEY! Akinori Tsukioka is one of my personal faves and he is quite the young good lil worker who is also creating quite the Highflying Stupid Bumps highlight reel that is becoming quite formidable in it's scope of chair-smashing and latitude of degree of shoulder-separation. Meanwhile, Sasaki is part of the DDT GODHEAD of Asian Cougar, Kyohei Mikami and Takashi Sasaki (Phil Schneider gives mad phat props to Kurokage also, but we can't just name the entire roster as the Best Of DDT. Kurokage is very fine also, though.) This match was kinda truncated and Nitro-like, in that there was a little matwork in the beginning, but it was mostly Tsukioka getting in his spots before the foray into nearfalls. It was deeper than the Nitro label in that Akinori is on the offense the entire time, hitting his bigger and bigger power arsenal- as Sasaki counters out with cool roll-ups. So they jam a lot of match into a short period of time. Okinori keeps it focused and driven as he eschews the fabulous highspots he's not afraid to bring to the table and instead they build to a finish really well with a Falcon Arrow into a NASTY-landing SkyTwister (whacking Sasaki right in the face with his knee) to a Tiger driver for nearfalls, with Sasaki selling it all well enough that the FLASH! counter roll-up for the three count was actually surprising. It's a good little match, but was quite the first match on the card. I would have liked to have seen Tsukioka in the tournament again later, in a match that would have allowed him to die for my pleasure more. Good little match though between two good workers.

Kyohei Mikami vs Tanomusako Toba: Toba is the fun-loving, Boxing-glove Bedecked guy with the Muy Thai Kickboxer gimmick and Mikami is the best worker in the promotion. Mikami is pretty tiny but makes up for it spunk, skill and tenacity. Mikami first caught my eye as a graceful highflyer on an Onita Pro match and, here, he goes all shootstyle on Toba and it's really good for a few minutes there as they really punch each other really hard and build the match around Toba trying to land a knockout punch and Mikami eating him alive on the mat. Toba gets in some big punches early- but the gloves ruin it. I mean I and everybody watching will have seen Yuki Ishikawa dole the same level of ass-kicking without gloves, so the gloves look pansy-assed in the Pro Style Setting. Either way, Mikami punches him in the ribs a lot on the ground, so I adored this, needless to say. Toba does other cool things like flipping over and punching out of a Cross-Armbreaker that Makami had flown into like a testosterone-drenched Reiko Amano or something. After almost punching out of the second Cross-Armbreaker, Makami turns it into a Triangle Hold to make the scrawny little bastard TAP!- which was pretty neato. Toba is more fun in other matches I've seen him in as he sort of grew into his Scrawny Little Bastard roll really well by the time the other DDT HH comes along- but that's for next weeks SECOND MUCH BIGGER DOSE OF DDT to hit in DVDVR #115. At a CyberNewstand NEAR YOU! Next ot all that PORN!

Asian Cougar vs Super Cacao: Cougar is king-sized for Indie scum- he's got the cool assed yellow, frayed pants and the totally styling Black/Yellow with decorative Canji mask- and he's got the crazy highspots onto chairs and cool ass legdrop variations and THAT COATING of pseudo-Lucha Puroresu indie that makes him underground and caustic and beyond cool.

People who are down with Asian Cougar are hip and those who aren't are wrestle SQUARES, DADDY! The rubes haven't co-opted him yet (though he isn't as cool as the unco-optable Akinori and Yamakawa, who is there for YOU the Fellow Pathetic Puroresu Indie Freak and YOU alone.) Super Cacao is all over that CMLL Japan we're reviewing in DVDVR #115 and this match is all about the Lucha as they do lotsa midgrade armdrags and elaborate lucha spots, as the unmasked Cacao is quite proficient if not overly graceful with his highflying and basic lucha trappings. The trappings I speak of- the armdrags and headscissors- demand more grace and precision than Cacao can bring to make them spectacular and transcendent (for the Spectacular Example, SEE: Early Angel Azteca, Valodor, and Rencor Latino). The great ones take it BEYOND the scope of being the "first part of the match leading up to the highspots and the finish" and make it beautiful and elegant and spine-tingling. They make it the ART of Lucha Libre. Either way, after a slight foray into lucha, Asian Cougar does a legdrop off the apron and then they go to the finish. This was quite the Worldwide 1998 match- which isn't good enough for tapes travelling across the ocean to my VCR and it isn't enough for me to be excited about and isn't good enough to be a match to include Asian Cougar. Cacao busts out the UD/WAR Springboard second-rope plancha after a moment of hesitation for his big highspot. Not very long at all. The major saving grace is that this match is the beginning of the matches where the Hottest Ref In The World starts reffing. Ponytails are SOOOOOO sexy...WOO-HOO! She does need a sammich though.

Onryo vs Mitsunobu Kikuzawa: Onryo is DEAD! HE is the LIVING DEAD! Onryo is the pinnacle of indie-idiot highflying as he fearlessly doesn't hit a single highspot without landing in some impossible, neck-crushing position. Kikuzawa is the Best Johnny Grunge Ever- a big chubbed-out seedy youngster with a nice dropkick and nice twisting moonsault senton. I'm starting to dig Onryo for a couple of reasons beyond the fact that he is DEAD! He wrestles Lucha Muta- all deliberate but with a tricked-out armdrag here, a comically self-detroying plancha there. I dig the way that his Muta-aping slows down the usual Japanese Junior match to the point that they work an armbar section that works into an armdrag exchange where the armbar section builds up the sudden pop of the Armdrag section for a big cool FOCUS on the spot- sort of like working up to a highspot, thus it infuses a non-Lucha psychology into a rote Lucha spot. Actually, this match is pretty inventively derivative (if that phrase makes any sense. Think all post-modern and shit)- as Onryo works on the knee of Kikuzawa as if to somewhere down the line slap on the figure-four and the Indian Deathlock With A Bridge. Kikuzawa acquits himself well as he gets the offensive Transition with a SWANK DiBiase Powerslam into a Falcon Arrow, then makes with the Aforementioned Twisting Senton Moonsault. After getting on the semi-offense with a FOULE!!! Onryo takes a Jackhammer and rolls through a roll-up for the FLASH! pin. This was good. Maybe Onryo at the J-Cup won't be as preposterous as it seems. Kikuzawa has a future also. Kikuzawa pays homage to his US Indie brethren by throwing in a really shitty People's Elbow just like in a match RIGHT NOW! in some high school gym somewhere in the heartland of America- as American Sycho (one half of the Quad City WildSide) will eventually beat Bret Ice Cold Nash with a Diamond Cutter at 25:34.

Asian Cougar vs Takashi Sasaki: DDT GODHEAD MEETS DDT GODHEAD! For 4:56! One big over-the-toprope legdrop and 35 nearpinfalls and we call it a match. THIS IS A SEMI-FINAL?

Not that it wasn't an action-packed 4:56. Asian Cougar becomes Asian Violencia bumping like a motherfucking freak as Sasaki- the overly-intense, cycling-pants bedecked true Junior with the SWANK~! power arsenal- drop kicks Cougar off of the top turnbuckle and does an over-the-toprope dropkick through the chairs. Sasaki hits the ugliest-landing Brainbuster I've seen in a while, which he follows up with a beautiful Spinning Northern Lights Bomb. Cougar fights out of Superplex attempt with assorted elbows and Sasaki is in perfect position for the fantabulously elaborate Guillotine off the ringpost through the top rope to the floor. Three legdrop variations, a batch of cool roll-ups and preposterous Rings Of Saturn Variation submission hold and they call it a match. 15 minutes and I think you would have a really good match. Sasaki is really good and so is Asian Cougar. They should have had more confidence in them to go longer. I dunno.

Onryo vs Kiyohi Mikami: Ah! this is more like it. if the final wasn't so balls out, THIS would be the best match on the card. Onryo and Mikami bring the frickin' PAIN in this baby- as Onryo further show evidence that he can- more than likely- look really good dying a horrible, crumpled death at the Super J in April as a representative of Wrestle Dream and the Indie Walking Dead. I was talking to fellow Death Valley Knucklehead- Phil Schneider and we were pondering Onryo's amazingly suicidal tendencies and Phil seemed to think that Onryo was of the same mindset as Psicosis in those Tijuana matches where he would seem to try break his own spinal column. I'm of a much more severe school of Onryo Analysis. I think he is a MARK! to his own GIMMICK! and he REALLY wants to die in a match and attempt to resurrect himself three days later. As evidence, I offer up THIS: after Mikami does the Plancha to nowhere- surely a goofy and dangerous bump by itself- ONRYO decides that he CANNOT LIVE ANYMORE- and does a FRICKIN' Springboard Somersault Plancha TO MOTHERFUCKING NOWHERE! Right on his powdery, uncombed head! In two matches, in front of 120 people at a DDT show, Onryo bumps like Jeff Hardy on heavy depressants- including landing DIRECTLY ON HIS SHOULDER WRONG and LANDING DIRECTLY ON HIS HEAD WRONG- in as many consecutive matches. Think of it this way: the Super J Cup will be REALLY high profile, while this HH only saw the light of day because Doron has some weird inside connections; The J-Cup will be on GAORA and will have a Commercial tape and everything. I see Onryo sawing off own arms in mid-air right before setting off the nailbomb strapped around his waist as he jobs to Sasuke the Great in the first round. Mikami does his part to cripple himself in front of the DDT faithful- as he does a diving headbutt right into Onryo's uplifted feet and Mikami takes it right across the throat, mangling his scrawny neck in the process. Onryo shows that his offense is more than just a personal living car-crash reenactment as he busts out the lucha roll-ups and assorted mid-grade powerbombs and powerbombs for hot nearfalls. Mikami hits a bunch of Urican/Enzuguiri combos that set up the roll-up for the the big win and we are set for the big final. WOO-HOO!

Takagi/ Exciting Yoshida/Kurokage vs. Yasaku/Daisaku/Kengo Takai: Exciting Yoshida isn't very good- NOOO not at all. Kurokage doesn't do much in this, though his Kanemoto-via-Sayama stuff is pretty fun-loving. I figure I'll need to use up my "Phone-Calls-To-Schneider-As-Actual-Content-And-Analysis" quota next week. Let's just say that this was better than your usual WAR or IWA Japan Heavyweight time-killer. Takagi is fun as Japan Indie Scum Stone Cold Steve Austin. The other three are anyone's guess.

Asian Cougar vs Kiyohi Mikami: This was the Tournament final and this was pretty great- as they held back all their big spots for this- but it STILL under ten minutes which is INSANITY. Mikami is fucking GREAT on the mat and makes with the beautiful mutated Minoru Tanaka-esque Luchashootaresu Mat bastardizations- including the SUPERfreaked out roll-up for the pin. Cougar is king-sized with the big Guillotines he was saving, including the one over the top rope off the the apron to the floor and really nasty one in combination with a dropkick that looked hurty as all hell. Mikami hits the cool Face-buster on the apron straight into the Hurricanrana on the floor. Asian Cougar counters with a Reverse Springboard Rolling Senton to the floor. Mikami goes with the wacky roll-ups and gets the pin and I'm wondering if this was brilliantly edited by crack 1980s AJW TV post-production geniuses because your FINAL should be longer than the match before it that was there to kill time.

Either way, this is pretty cool. I wish the matches were longer, but it is a batch of good wrestling by a very super-promising crew of youngsters, so you should get this. Yes. Get this. I wish the matches were longer.

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&*~&*~&*~&*~&*~&* BattlARTS 11/9/99

(PHIL SCHNEIDER)

Ikuto Hidaka/ Mach Junji v. Minoru Fujita / Takashi Hijikata: This match was all about the Japanese Fantastics beating the crud out of each other. Hidaka and Fujita who were partners in the highflyingist face team in Japan, are teaming up with the low men on the BattlArts totem pole. This match was clipped with mostly the Fujitia v. Hidaka stuff, Fujita who I always thought was the weaker of the two, looked really good here, hitting a really great rolling kneebar and working pretty stiff. Mach Junji gets a rare win, and Hidaka and Fujita do the stare down at the end. I could get into a longish feud between the two....

Masao Orihara / Takeshi Ono v. Carl Malenko / Katsumi Usuda: Orihara and Ono (who have the coolest name in Puroresu, the Tonpachi Machine Guns) are the best crappy tag team in the world, as they are really fucking cool looking, and huge dicks, and have great hair, but actually don't deliver much of anything in the ring. This match was pretty good though, all though it was clipped to hell. Carl Malenko was the king in this, as he continues to be the funnest gaijin in Japan, he was all fired up, kicking Takeshi right in the mush, and using possibly the coolest counter I have seen, Orihara went for a foul, and Malenko blocked with his thigh, and twisted his knee, taking Orihara down (all this without using his hands) and locking in a crippler crossface variation. Malenko is turning into such a great worker, melding the U.S. prostyle carny work he learned in Florida, with the shootstyle stuff he picked up in BattlArts, he is turning into one of the top mat wrestlers around.

Minoru Tanaka v. Curry Man: This match was clipped to Purgatoeu, and thus it was hard to get a real idea of its quality. It appeared to be another disappointing effort under the hood from our boy Christopher Daniels. I imagine Daniels hasn't adjusted to the Puroresu style yet as he has had only a couple of dozen Japanese matches. I hope he gets it together, because I am a

fan, and it is easier to get his Japan stuff. He hasn't had the breakout match his stateside fans have been waiting for. There were some highlights in this match though. Curry his his double jump moonsault landing his knee on Tanaka's face, and Minoru hit his freaking choice northern lights suplex floatover into a cross armbreaker, but the rest was uneventful.

Maasaki Mochizuki v. Naoki Sano: Naoki Sano spent the better part of the last decade wrestling in straight shootstyle promotions like UWFI and Kingdom, so one would expect him to come into a quasi-shoot promotion like BattlArts and incorporate that background, especially against a Buko Dojo worker like Mochizuki. Instead the closest he comes to a shoot hold is a half crab and he wrestles just like Owen Hart did in Stampede. Don't get me wrong, this match was the biscuits, as they had a gadtrillion near falls, with Sano breaking out every U.S. prostyle roll-up in the world, along with a bunch of suplexes, and our boy Maasaki doing some face kicking and deliver a spectacularly great brainbuster. I really dug this, as Sano has been a nice addition to the BattlArts roster with his whole tricked out Denny Royal offense, and this was probably his best match during this run. You want this badboy.

Yuki Ishikawa / Mohammed Yone v. Daisuke Ikeda / Kazunori Murakami: This is why we as a collective search out these august Samurai TV presentations. My advice for BattlArts newbies is, if you see a match on your friendly Jeff Lynch tapelist which has Daisuke Ikeda on one side and Yuki Ishikawa on the other, mortgage the house and pay the piper. These two have that Flair v. Steamboat, Juventud v. Rey, Misawa v. Kawada workers charisma, where every time they are in the ring together you gets tingles up and down your arms. The evolution of Yuki Ishikawa is kind of fascinating, in the earlier days of BattlArts he wrestled a very New Japan Strong Style, kind of a nise Tatsumi Fujinami, he was a capable worker but nothing special. Then about a year and ha half ago something just clicked, it was probably during a match with Ikeda, and Daisuke had just kicked him square in the face, Ishikawa must have thought "Fuck this, I just come out here and get pummed, I run this stinking promotion, take THAT!!!" and just wound up and socked Ikeda in the eye, and we were off to the races. When Ishikawa added the stiff ass punches to his arsenal, it elevated the rest of his game. The exchanges with the BattlArts strikers were more compelling because they were even, and he now had a weapon that could counter the more shootish workers like Otsuka and Tanaka. Add that aspect to his already stellar Boris Malenko taught mat wrestling and Ishikawa is at the top of the sport. This match had all the real life violence that Ishikawa v. Ikeda promises, but it also had great performances from Murakami and Yone. Mohammed is inconsistent as all get out, but he was fired up in this match, jumping UFO boy Murakami and working real stiff (which is not one of Yone's strengths) including stiff kicking Kazunori right in the store. In his previous work in BattlArts Murakami had delved too much into RINGish worked shooting, but the early attack by Yone put him in a brawling mood, which is what BattlArts style is, a focused, wrestling based brawl. Hell of a match and worth getting the tape for.

Alexander Otsuka v. Misuhiro Matsunaga: I think Alexander Otsuka may be a bigger wrestling fan than anyone else in Japan. You can just tell he loves his job, and he is willing to do any kind of match. He likes Lucha Libre so he has six-man matches in Michinoku Pro with Super Astro and Lucha comedy with Yone Genjin, he likes shooting and shootstyle so he goes and works

PRIDE and UFO, he was a Road Warrior mark as a child so he puts over the OLD at the 8888 show, these matches aren't always good (in fact they often suck, Genjin v. Otsuka was exscretable) but the love of what he does makes him hard to hate. Otsuka was evidentially a big W*ING fan too, as he spends this match getting carved up by broken down wreck Matsunaga. The dream is dead for Mitsuhiro, as the years of bumps have taken their toll, and he can't do crap anymore, he spends this match wrestling like Tiger Jeet Singh, as he stabs Otsuka with a spike and Alex sprays blood. Not .. very.. good. Hell, if Alex wanted to do a big blade job, more power to him, but let's hope he got this out of his system.

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!@!@!@!@GAEA G! Panic!

(REV RAY DUFFY)

We join Meiko Satomura in the studio, everyone's celebrating, so I think this is probably the first show after GAEA was won back the promotion following Double Destiny.

Etsuko Mita /Mima Shimoda /Lioness Aska /Sonoko Kato v. Meiko Satomura /KAORU /Toshiyo Yamada /Chigusa Nagoya: This starts with Mita and Chigusa working the mic. We jump into the match and it's the Crush Gals going at it. Lioness gets control and locks in the Scorpion Deathlock. Chigusa rope saves and Kato is tagged in. Kato gets in a few moves on Chigusa. Kato gets into trouble and Lioness drops Chigusa. The battle transfers to the Prologe Crush Gal melt down as Kato and Satomura mix it up for a bit. Mita tries for her off the second rope electric chair suplex, but Satomura counters it with the cross armbreaker. We get some of the usual LCO chair play. The big story of this match is the continuing cracks in the Super Star Unit. It becomes clear that Mita and Shimoda have not made this match a high priority to them and it shows when Lioness is being pinned or going for a pin, only Kato is running in to cut off the GAEA squad. This results in the funny site of Kato holding Yamada, Satomura and Nagoya in the corner by herself as Lioness hits the Towerhacker Bomb on KAORU only to have the pin broken up when the GAEA team tosses Kato off into the pile. Kato tries her best to take out Satomura with the version of the Lioness spin kick, the Dragon suplex and Crown's Gate, but eventually, she gets caught in the DVB by Satomura and it's over as the GAEA team cuts off Lioness and the LCO just sort of stand there. Post match, Mita and Shimoda have nasty things to say about Lioness on the microphone. And the Super Star Unit is reduced to 2. Mita and Shimoda put an exclamation point on this by stomping Lioness's custom indestructable table. Then... to rub salt into the wound, Nostrodomus come out to talk shit and Lioness AND the GAEA team.

It appears as though the longhair commentator has a Val Venis t-shirt on in this episode.

Mayumi Ozaki/Akira Hokuto v. Meiko Satomura/Chigusa Nagoya : Nostrodomus attacks at the bell and this goes to the floor. Hokuta does assorted chokes and hair pulls early on Meiko. There's a neat bit where Meiko's crawling to make the tag to Chigusa and Ozaki cuts it off by stepping on her hand and making fun of Nagoya. It appears that since Hokuto has lost a step since giving birth to Satan's spawn, so she's resulting to heel heat/psychology rather than her former dynamic moves. There's a weird segment in this where it looks like Satomura clearly makes a tag, but it's waved off for some

reason. Chigusa finally makes the tag, but ends up in a 4 way stomp down as Sugar and Chikago run in. Chigusa gets on the scorpion on Ozaki, Akira tries to break it up, but Meiko attacks her and puts her into the Boston crab. Sugar and Chikayo run in and Uematsu and Hirota cut them off and put them in Boston crabs as well before Tommy Ran makes everyone break up the holds. Both Chigusa and Satomura get sent to the floor. Hokuto hits a dive off the post. Both Chigusa and Satomura get chairs broken on their heads and do a double blade job following some posting action. This is followed by Hokuto working over the wound on Chigusa's head in ring. Chigusa makes the tag to a bloody Meiko who takes some minor stuff before knocking down Hokuto and hitting a slingshot double stomp. She works the cross armbreaker and then goes kick crazy on Hokuto, but she makes a mistake and gets hit with a near dangerous back drop by Hokuto. She's on the receiving end of some double teams by Oz and Akira. Oz goes up top, Meiko tries to get in cross arm breaker off the ropes, but Oz hands on until Chigusa kicks her off the ropes. Ozaki gets to play super ball as Chigusa and Meiko give up forearm uppercuts and kicks leading to a Meiko DVB. They do fight over finishers back and forth with Meiko and Oz as Akira holds off Chigusa on the floor. Ozaki gets hit with the backflip kick and a DVB, but the Ozettes make the save. They hold up Meiko for Oz to hit about 50 urakens and then she falls victim to the Tequila Sunrise. It was a very sports entertainment type ending. The ending sucked with all the run ins. Akira seems to be more about psychology more than spots, so if you're longing for the old high workrate Akira, you might want to wait awhile to see if she gets back into her old form.

Our next segment is clips of Chikayo Nagashima v. Chigusa Nagoya. The clips are pretty much of Nagashima getting destroyed by Chigusa including having some chairs broken on her head. Chigusa sets up a chair over her body and takes a seat, daring the other Ozettes to try to retrieve their fallen companion. As the ring announcer comes out to announce the next match, Chigusa drags her victim out to the floor as Lioness Aska and Sonoko Kato come out for their match with Ozaki and Hokuto. This leads to a goofy segment with Chigusa holding up Chikayo against the rail as Chigusa mimes in a Wisconsin accent "Oh gee golly, look at this fine beauty I bagged me here. She's gonna look great mounted over my fireplace in the den." Lioness looks on with a smirk as Chigusa claps along to Lioness' theme music. Of course Ozaki and Hokuto look less than pleased at what has happened to Nagashima and immediately charge Chigusa, only to be jumped by Kato/Aska. Aska beats on Ozaki early. Kato brings a table into the ring only to have Akira drop kick it so she falls under it, then to have Aska laid out on the table and for Ozaki to double stop Aska. Nostrodomus beats up on Kato some and she blades and plays Ricky Morton as Oz and Akira bite, punch, claw, kick and stomp her in the head. Kato finally makes the tag after Aska kicks Akira in the back of the head. Akira tries to fight out of the giant swing, but Aska holds her down for Kato to drop the top rope leg drop and then hits the swing. Akira gets put under the table and stomped. Lioness softens up Akira with some powerbomb and tags to Kato. Kato goes for the Dragon suplex, but when Akira won't go over, Aska runs in and accidentally drops Kato with a lariat. Ozaki crushes Kato with a powerbomb but pulls her up at two, then does it again after Akira spikes a second bomb. Aska runs in with her chain, but gets hit first and drops it, leading to Ozaki knocking her out of the ring with a few chain assisted urakens. Hokuto then hits Aska with the somersault dive off the post. Nostrodomos bust up Lioness with the chain on the floor.

When Chigusa tries to save her ex partner, she gets attacked by the Ozettes and a brawl breaks out between the GAEA crew and the Oz Academy. Lioness are chained to the ringpost as Kato is on the receiving end of several dangerous backdrops, a powerbomb before falling to the Northern Lights Bomb. Post match, Nostrodomos talk shit on the mic as both their enemies are left laying. Akira also questions Tommy Ran on some of her counts.

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Highlights from the High Spurt 600 tournament are shown.

Kaori Nakayama v. Meiko Satomura : Satomura does a neat move where she uses a missed high roundhouse kick to set up a crossarm breaker. Kaori scores a near fall by hitting a captured suplex as a counter to a kick. There's a bunch of counters and flying and stuff, but Kaori gets caught in a cross armbreaker and taps.

Toshiyo Yamada v. Sugar Sato: Yamada puts this one away quick as Sugar counters one kick with a dragon screw, but eats a spinning hook kick and a reverse gory special bomb to win in 26 seconds.

Chikayo Nagashima v. KAORU : This was kind of neat as it looks like Chikayo is turning into a German suplexing machine in this match. KAORU gets in an Argentine Backbreaker, but Chikayo counters it into a cross arm breaker, Which KAORU eventual powers out of. This was clippified and went 9 minutes, with KAORU winning with two running Excaliburs.

Satomura v. Yamada : This is majorly clippified. Satomura wins in 4'44" after 3 consecutive DVB's.

Mayumi Ozaki v. Yoshie Uematsu : Again with the clipification. Toshie bleeds following some knuckles tot he head by Ozaki. This is back and forth, but Oz puts it out in 4 minutes with the running Lyger Bomb.

RIE v. Sonoko Kato : Clips. RIE fights out of a top rope Kamakazi attempt to hit a diving knee. RIE fights out of two Crown's Gate attempts but gets caught with a dragon suplex allowing Kato to advance.

Sakura Hirota v. Akira Hokuto : Sakura comes out dressed as Hokuto with a baby carriage and all. She does some impersonations of Akira which Akira doesn't take kindly to. Akira wins in about 1'26" with the strangle hold gamma and then whacks Hirota with her fake baby.

Mayumi Ozaki v. Sonoko Kato : Kato blocks Ozaki's uraken attempt, hits the Lioness spin kick and Crown's Gate for two and then a top rope leg drop for two. Oz gets in control and its a fisherman buster, but Lioness runs in and mists Ozaki, allowing Kato to hit the Dragon Suplex for the win.

Akira Hokuto v. Chigusa Nagoya : Ozettes set up Chigusa on the floor for a plancha, then out of the blue, RIE runs in and plancha's Chigusa, turning on the GAEA squad. Akira hits a top rope drop kick which Chigusa no sells and then hits two Death Valley Bombs. They trade some

near falls until Chigusa catches Akira in a Straggle Hold Gamma set up into an arm lock for the win.

The show raps up with a recap of the final 4 for the High Spurt Tournament which are Satomura, KAORU, Kato and Nagoya. The show ends with the run down of the upcoming events and the GAEA all purpose neck clip.

Overall, it was a bit too much on the clipification for me on some of the matches. There was a lot of angles done in the show too, which took away from some the wrestling.

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NEW THEME: INTERPROMOTIONAL WARS OF HATE!!!\$

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ATSUSHI ONITA/TARZAN GOTO vs. GENICHIRO TENRYU/ASHURA HARA- WRESTLE AND ROMANCE-3/2/94, Tokyo Sumo Hall)- (PETE STEIN): The brief FMW-WAR, well, war, kicked off with this INSANELY hot tag match highlighted by the "first confrontation" between Onita and Tenryu. Match starts off with Goto trying to pull something good out of the worthless Hara, but Goto immediately realizes that it's a lost cause and deposits Hara on the floor where all four briefly go at it. Tenryu tags in but Goto drops him with a Kunze Armbar mutation and Tenryu tags Hara back in. Onita tags in for the first time and Hara tags in Tenryu- POP!!! Tenryu and Hara start to go nuts on Onita, who blades about a zillion times off Hara's headbutts and a post job, and Tenryu joins the fun by giving the cut some dick kicks while Onita lies on the apron. It's funny because Tenryu's working heel in his own group against the INDY SCUM from FMW... it gets even funnier as Onita slaps a figure-four on Tenryu only for Hara to work the cut over some more to NUCLEAR heat. Onita finally ducks a corner charge from Hara and tags Goto who chops Hara's chest raw. Onita tags back in and hits a FUCKING MISSILE DROPKICK on Hara- I don't think he'd hit one of those in at least 10 years. Tenryu tags back in and he and Hara hit a sandwich lariat on Onita. Tenryu follows with the powerbomb, but Goto breaks up the pin and Tenryu replies by destroying him on the floor. He starts to climb back in, but Onita's recovered and plants him with a DDT as he steps through the ropes. Hara tags back in, but while he and Onita go at it Goto sneaks around and CRUSHES Tenryu with a chairshot. Goto heads back in and trades lariats with Hara, then tags Onita in who hits a backdrop on Hara. Goto follows with a splash off the top, Onita adds a top-rope headbutt to Hara's ribcage and Hara starts to sell the ribs like crazy. Tenryu isn't gonna be much help, as he's juicing off the Goto chairshot and out on his feet. Onita hits a second backdrop, but Hara finally makes the tag to Tenryu and heads to the floor to have his ribs taped up. Tenryu hits the enzuigiri and the top-rope elbow, but Goto saves Onita. Tenryu gives Goto some "IHATEYOU IHATEYOU IHATEYOU!" punches, but Goto tosses him out, clears the announcers' table and gives Tenryu a face-first piledriver on the table. Goto tosses him back inside, where Onita hits a DDT and follows with the TFPB. Tenryu kicks out and Hara tries to save him, but he gets tossed back out and both Onita and Goto ram him ribs-first into the post. Tenryu tries to come back with a pair of enzuigiris, but Onita no-sells the second one and sets Tenryu up for another top-rope splash from Goto. Tenryu comes back with a lariat and charges Goto on the apron, but Goto kicks him right in the

face and Onita hits a backdrop for 2. Tenryu comes back with a koppo kick slaps on an abdominal stretch while Hara tries to restrain Goto, but Goto gets away and hits an enzuigiri(!) on Tenryu to break the hold. Tenryu ducks a second enzuigiri try, but in doing so he sets himself up in TFPB position for Onita, who drops Tenryu on his head on the first try but hits it on the second for the win at 19 minutes. Really fun Onita match, as he and Goto were working their asses off and the crowd was collectively wetting themselves for everything. I never want to see Hara again and I shudder to think how huge of a problem he had that Giant-fricking-Baba couldn't even cover up for him...

Genchiro Tenryu vs Atsushi Onita- Frontier Martial-Arts Wrestling- Exploding Barbed Wire Cage Match- Kawasaki Stadium-5/5/94- (DEAN RASMUSSEN): Hey! This is the big pay-off to the ill-fated WAR/FMW marriage and this was a beautiful way to go out. I remember the first time I saw this. It was the same week as my first viewing of Funk vs Onita No-ropes Barbed-wire and I remember being impressed by this match and thinking that the Funk/Onita match was really great. Five years later, I'm switching horses. This match is even better than I remember and it has relevance to the resurgence of watchable deathmatches from Japan, because this was DEEPLY a wrestling match first, with gimmicks used as support for the main framing of the psychology of the match. The beginning is both trying to throw the other into exploding barbed-wire after working out of the headlock. Onita goes into it first and it is Tenryu's first offensive transition, as he uses the advantage to take Onita to the mat and work on his leg. After Tenryu-like stiff kicks to the knee joint and kneedrops on the knee, Teryu slaps on the Figure-four. Onita's strongest suit is selling and he sells the damage like a master- fighting for the ropes that aren't there for a break that won't come in a deathmatch, so he struggles to reverse it and escape the hold. Tenryu starts pummeling the weepy Onita and hits a Vertical Suplex! for a two-count. Tenryu goes to an Octopus Hold after a weak preliminary Stuff Powerbomb, but Onita escapes more ass-beating from Tenryu by ducking a Lariat thus throwing Tenryu headfirst into the exploding barbed-wire cage and thus Onita goes into his Blue-Print For A Hundred FMW Matches That Would Follow when he hits a Thunder Fire Powerbomb to weaken Tenryu and fights for the second to finish him. When Tenryu kicks out, Onita procures the Sleeper that Tenryu kicks out of by kicking Onita reight in the face. Onita goes for some running headbutts and Tenryu throws him face first into the cage and goes back on offense, kicking Onita in the face with the tender mercy that Tenryu always shows when kicking an opponent Right In the Motherfucking Face (as in, "hey, Genchiro, why don't you just rub my face in the barbed-wire and then pour Texas Pete on top. It wouldn't hurt as much.") Another Stuff Powerbomb for two and the crowd is rabid, a third and face first into the exploding barbed-wire and it's curtains, but Tenryu sells the previous damage to allow a a roll-up by Onita to pop the crowd! Tenryu REALLY punts Onita right in the face and hits Stuff PowerBomb #4 for two and down to math at this point as five does the trick. I liked how the structure of the match effectively uses the hideous gimmicks but doesn't rely on them at all. The point that this match may have been just as good without the exploding barbed-wire doesn't hold water, I don't think, because Onita wouldn't look credible going into his offense without Tenryu going into the barbed-wire. It's this point of psychology that made the finish in question and added to the hotness of the finish. This is one of the best Onita matches and a great FMW match and is a great prototype of how to effectively build a good all-around Death Match with actual wrestling elements- which I guess is key to any successful match.

++_+_+_+ "Debunking Interpromotional"- (TONY GANCARSKI): Like every other fat tenement redneck whiteboy in the 80s, I went to the local supermarket -- Piggly Wiggly, in my case -- and either read the Aptermags while sitting in front of the magazine rack or stuffed them into my pants for perusal at home. Despite all their flaws, PWI and their ilk were useful tools to get me thinking more concretely about the possibilities inherent in pro wrestling. What if I could become a midget wrestler and step into the arena V Lord Littlebrook? What if I could become an apartment wrestler and wrestle in a three-way dance? What if WWF or AWA wrestlers could somehow wrestle the people I saw on TV every week in the Carolinas? The first two questions aren't really grist for the current DVDVR, of course.

I knew that sometimes wrestlers from other promotions actually came south to wrestle NWA folks. Flair and Backlund went at it in '82 in the Omni, for example. But there was always a whiff of gimmickry about those matches. You never saw them on TV, for the obvious reason that neither promotion could agree about who should have rights to the footage. And the matches never

really had clean finishes, either. DCORs, DDQs, and other creative finishes left openings for booker to never have to construct ends to the stories they told.

Once the McMahon expansion began, of course, cooperation in that relatively giving spirit was at an end. An air of entrenchment permeated the regional promotions of the south, as the good old boys came to realize that every one of their crown jewels were being purloined for the glossy, yet cheap, setting of the Titan midcard. As the 80s made their grim progression, we saw folks like the Batten Twins pushed as maineventers in places like St. Louis that once saw Brody and DiBiase rock the house. Interpromotional matches started rearing their ugly heads during the talent depletion. Verne Gagne, who only had so many sons and so many ugly daughters to service the locker room, wanted to work with people -- any people. Of course, there was no way he could have his heat magnets put anyone over, so the AWA/NWA cooperation went nowhere fast. Similar glib summaries can be written for the efforts of Jerry Jarrett and Fritz Von Erich in this regard, with the highlight of the 80s as far as US interpromotionality went being that Jerry Jarrett won the WCCW from Fritz in a friendly game of poker. Or maybe it was the other way around.

The 90s weren't much better. To pull house show gates out of the single digits, Jim Cornette's SMW went head to head with the USWA. Old-school wrestling, natch, given that most of the workers that hadn't escaped to Atlanta or CT at that point were best seen with blindfolds on. Perhaps I pan it too hard.

Do I have to remind anyone of the NWA invasion of the WWF?

So, in short, I come to bury the issue's theme. Consider me a Banquo's ghost as far as that goes. When wrestling promoters and wrestlers learn to think long term and learn not to worry about someone siphoning their heat and so on and so forth, then I'll get excited. Until then, interfederational matches stand most prominently as proof of human venality. Whipass!

@@@@@@@@ Akira Maeda/ Yoshiaki Fujiwara/ Osamu Kido/ Nobuhiko Takada/ Kazuo Yamazaki vs. Antonio Inoki/ Tatsumi Fujinami/ Kengo Kimura/ Umanosuke Ueda/ Kantaro Hoshino -3/26/86-(PHIL SCHNEIDER): This was after the failure of the first UWF, and was a battle between the returning wrestlers and the defenders of the New Japan tradition. This had

one of the hottest crowds I think I have ever seen. As a rule I don't buy people who rate matches high, because the crowd was hot, but the action in this match played off the emotion of the crowd so well, that the fan enthusiasm was an integral part. This was an elimination match, where eliminations could come by being forced to the floor, this allowed eliminations without having to do pinfall or submission jobs. This match went 35+ minutes and had a lot of great work before the first elimination, unfortunately Yamazaki was the first UWF guy eliminated as he is one of the better workers. The best work of the early part of the match was when Fujinami and Maeda were in together, which is no surprise because they had one of the best singles matches ever. Takada also looked good. Ueda (who looks like a cross between Tarzan Goto and Tatsushi Goto) was used really well, he was the aging legend who couldn't compete anymore, but wanted to fight for the honor of the company. Every time he tagged in the crowd went apeshit, but he would tag out without making contact. The match came down to Maeda + Kido and Takada v. Inoki and Ueda (When Fujinami got eliminated, leaving it 3 on 2 with Ueda as one of the NJ boys, I cringed it looked like Dustnoki was lining up the three big UWF stars for the bionic elbow). Ueda tags in for the first time to face the most dangerous UWF wrestler Maeda, and sort of bowls into him taking them both to the floor, and sacrificing himself to the roar of the crowd, very cool booking and a good use of a worker who would jeopardize the match quality if used differently. This also allowed for the New Japan win, while still heavily protecting Maeda. It was then Inoki versus Kido and Takada and it was a foregone conclusion, both guys get a near fall or two, before falling to Antonio, but you didn't get the sense that either had a legitimate shot of beating him, especially Kido who ended up in at the end. Very good match, which reminded me of the Canadian Stampede, where booking and heat elevated a match with some poor workers (Neidhart and the LOD and Ueda, Inoki and Fujiwara respectively), I would have like to see Inoki eliminated via the floor, and have Fujinami get the New Japan win, but the crowd was clamoring for Antonio, so that wasn't going to happen. Great, great match that has got me inspired to get my hands on some old UWF.

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THE CONTINUED SPOTLIGHT DANCE: GREAT MUTA!

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GREAT MUTA vs. HIROSHI HASE-12/14/1992- Osaka Furitsu Gym- (PETE STEIN): It just so happens that Rev Ray went over their first matchup in DVDVR previous; you, the gentle reader, might remember that Hase bled like a stuck pig at Muta's hands. Remember that. JIP at the 10-minute mark as Hase hits a sweet German suplex on Muta for 2 and turns into Arn Anderson, ripping Muta's eyes against the ropes. Muta heads out and tosses a chair into the ring which Hase and Tiger Hattori fight over; Hase says "GIMME CHAIR!" and kicks Tiger in the gut, but Muta grabs the chair and lays Hase out with it. He goes for the moonsault right away but Hase crotches him on the ropes and gives him a lariat. Muta pulls a KNIFE from under the ring and heaves a second chair inside. Hase punks Tiger again for the chair, sees Muta with the knife and goes "AH CRAP! Forget the chair!" He runs over, steals the knife and gives Muta the Oriental Spike in the truest sense of the word, and YE GODS does Muta hit the All-Time Super Ooey-Goey Bubbling Crude of Blood juice-job. The crowd's about to lose their collective lunch over this, and they go nuts when Hase bites at the gash and comes up with his entire torso

coated in Muta's blood. Muta reverses a whip into the corner and goes for the handspring elbow but misses, and Hase goes back on offense. He slaps a regular sleeperhold on Muta off a rope whip and the crowd actually pops for this, no doubt using the carny logic that Muta's gonna fucking DIE if all the blood really *does* rush to his head if someone puts a sleeper on him. Hase finally leaves the cut alone and works on Muta's legs with a Scorpion. He hits Muta with a kick to the head off the ropes, but Muta shakes it off and poses to a big pop. Hase hits two more kicks like this, but on the fourth try Muta ducks and hits a backdrop. He poses, hits 3 more backdrops and goes for the moonsault, but this time Hase rolls out of the way. Hase eventually struggles up and hits the uranage on Muta for 2, then adds a powerbomb for another 2-count. He goes for the uranage again but Muta reverses it into a Dragon Suplex for 2. By now Muta's starting to look like Bull Nakano with the blood in his hair making it stick out all over the place. He Mutas up and hits a second Dragon; Hase again kicks out at 2, but he's got nothing left in the tank. Muta hits the backbreaker and finally hits the moonsault for the pin at 23:04. Really good storyline match as they played off the 1990 bloodbath, and an OK wrestling match even with the gargantuan amount of blood.

Super Black Ninja v. Invader 1- WORLD WRESTLING COUNCIL- PUERTO RICO 1987- (DEAN RASMUSSEN) : In case you were wondering where the Great Muta ever learned how to wield such magic with a tiny corner of a razor blade, remember that one of New Japan's training grounds back in the day was the NWA affiliate in Puerto Rico- and here he shows the roots to his grotesquely flamboyant sputtering Bladejobs To Come in this little hideous gem from the lil Commonwealth of the US. There once was a time when sending your young prospect from Japan to other hemispheres was a GOOD idea and they would come back a better wrestler (as opposed to the Yuji Nagata Experience!) and the main thing Mutoh learned in Puerto Rico was twofold- from his great TNTmatch, he learned some finer points of how to work PR Pro-Style which is rock solid Pro Style and he has used the elements of that experience in all of his great matches, and- from this match- he learned to do whatever it takes to get over with the crowd. This crowd could give a shit where your from- if you can't look like are legitimately beating the shit out of someone, they will turn on you AND the match, forcing you to go home with old diapers sticking to the back your head. Luckily for everyone involved, the Larval Muta brings the ass-stomp in this and BOY! is it fun! Dressed for a Texas Deathmatch with his Levis and Cowboy boots, Mutoh blends in well to the wild-assed brawls that pock Puerto Rico's glorious Lucha history, eschewing basic amatuer and Carney holds to instead do his best Dick Murdock impersonation- mauling invader with his own WWC Championship belt as the match starts. Invader;s mask is already puddling up as we reach the first minute and they take it to the fairground field and Muta makes the mask-bloodpuddle bigger with chairshots and assorted Ringpostings. From here, he REALLY assumes the roll of Texas Ass-Stomper- pounding the bleeding skull of Invader with fabulous stiffness. Invader hits a REALLY GREAT Mark Mosely punt to Mutoh's groin and we have our first big offensive transition for Invader. WELCOME TO PUERTO RICO, MOTHERFUCKER- as they say. After hitting the floor again, Invader drops him across the wooden barricade and Mutoh WHIPS OUT THE BLADE LIKE HE IS MUTHA FUKKIN RAY THE CRIPPLER STEVENS or something and starts chewing on Invaders forehead. Very little of the white is left of his white mask. Mutoh foules Invader while being pelted by debris and camera is awash with blood! MUTA STARTS HERE! Mutoh gets the Muta glazed look in his eyes as the blood coats his face and he is strangling Invader with a camera

